



## **Patient Education for Low Back Pain (FY05-5068)**

### **The health problem or issue**

Low back pain (LBP) is the number one condition resulting in a military medical board. LBP is also one of the top two musculoskeletal problems in the deployed environment. LBP is also a major source of disability and the second most common reason for visiting a healthcare facility. Education on self care for LBP is still one of the primary methods for treating low back pain in primary care, but the methods used have not been reviewed for their effectiveness.

### **Outcome**

This initiative collected information regarding the effectiveness of the following three treatment approaches for LBP: the pamphlet developed for use with the DoD/VA Clinical Practice Guidelines, a group health education class, and an interactive computer-based education module.

### **Unique and/or innovative program aspects**

Data collection was conducted online using a well-known disability questionnaire. In addition, a pain scale and fear avoidance beliefs questionnaire was used to measure how the interventions in question affected Soldier disability, pain, and profile duration. Initial data was collected at the Troop Medical Clinic after Soldiers reported for treatment of their LBP. Follow-up data was collected by a web-based survey at two, four, and six weeks, and at three and six months post-injury.

### **Demonstration of program effectiveness and/or impact**

Limited data indicated a significant effect for the tailored intervention for first time back pain sufferers. Also, data indicated the limited effectiveness of the pamphlet and the class, which are the two primary means the Army uses to educate Soldiers and family members about managing their LBP.

### **Impact on force readiness and deployability**

Ineffective self care of LBP results in decreased readiness, increased profile rates, and increased disability from LBP. The data collected for this project is a baseline against which the effectiveness of educational interventions can be measured.

### **Impact on the HPPI portfolio**

This data should have an ultimate impact on the way Soldiers are taught to manage their back pain. The measures of disability, pain, and fear/avoidance beliefs are all valid and reliable for working age adults.